



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012
(213) 974-1101
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

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Second District

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Third District

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Fifth District

November 20, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

WASHINGTON, D.C. UPDATE

Chairmanship of House Energy and Commerce Committee

On November 20, 2008, the House Democratic Caucus voted 137 to 122 to select Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) to chair the House Energy and Commerce Committee. He unseated the previous chairman, Representative John Dingell (D-MI), who has seniority over Representative Waxman. The House Energy and Commerce Committee is an extremely important committee because it has jurisdiction over energy, climate change, air quality, environmental protection, telecommunications, trade, commerce, and most health matters, including Medicaid, national health insurance, public health, mental health, food and drugs, and biomedical programs.

Economic Stimulus Package

Congressional Democratic leaders had hoped to pass a comprehensive economic stimulus package during a lame duck session this week. However, the only element of a broader package, which was passed by Congress, is H.R. 6867, which would extend unemployment benefits by at least six weeks. On November 20, 2008, the Senate passed H.R. 6867 on a voice vote, clearing it for the President, who is expected to sign it into law. The House passed the bill on October 3, 2008. The Senate did not act on the Senate Democratic leadership's new \$100 billion economic stimulus package, which

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was announced earlier in the week. This is because Senate Republicans would have blocked its floor consideration and the Bush Administration threatened to veto the legislation.

The Senate Democratic stimulus package included a temporary eight percentage point increase in the Federal Medicaid match rate, \$25 billion in loans to the automobile industry, a temporary ten percent increase in Food Stamp benefits, \$13.5 billion for transportation projects, \$500 million for local governments to improve energy efficiency, \$600 million for Dislocated Worker and Youth Employment programs, \$500 million for COPS Hiring Grants, \$490 million for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, \$1.5 billion for housing programs, and \$200 million for the Community Services Block Grant. In late September, the House passed a \$60.8 billion stimulus bill (H.R. 7110), which also included a temporary Medicaid match rate increase, increased Food Stamp benefits, and increases in funding for transportation, job training, and housing programs.

A comprehensive economic stimulus package is dead for this year, but it is expected to be considered early next year when the new 111th Congress convenes. Congress is in recess next week. Congressional Democratic leaders have left open the possibility that the Congress may reconvene in early December to consider legislation to provide financial relief for the domestic automobile industry.

We will continue to keep you advised.

WTF:GK
MT:er

c: All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist